

**TESTIMONY OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND  
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 600**

**An Act To Include Archery Hunting Licenses among the  
Complimentary Licenses Issued to a Member of a Federally Recognized  
Indian Tribe, Nation or Band**

**SPONSORED BY:** Representative MITCHELL of the Penobscot Nation

**CO-SPONSORED BY:** Senator CAIN of Penobscot  
Representative KRUGER of Thomaston  
Representative LONGSTAFF of Waterville  
Representative RUSSELL of Portland

**DATE OF HEARING: April 30, 2013**

Good afternoon Senator Dutremble, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Michael Sawyer, Supervisor of the Recreational Safety Unit at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking in opposition to **L. D. 600**.

This bill if enacted would make it law to issue complimentary archery licenses to members of federally recognized Indian nations, bands and tribes. It also would exempt them from required trapper evaluation programs and archery hunter education courses.

The Department supports the intent of the first portion of this bill because the Department already issues archery hunting licenses as part of the list of complimentary licenses given to this user group. The archery hunting license is not currently listed in Title 12 as one of the complimentary licenses given however the Committee should be aware that Title 12 Section 10853-8 states *“the commissioner shall issue a hunting, trapping and fishing license, including permits, stamps and other permission needed to hunt, trap and fish, to a person 10 years of age or older, who is an enrolled member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians or the Aroostook Band of Micmacs that is valid for the life of that person without any charge or fee if...”* etc.

In regards to removing the exemption for the trapping and archery hunter education courses, the Department is opposed. Maine has a long history of educating sporting enthusiasts who undertake trapping, firearms hunting and bow hunting. Trapper

education became mandatory in 1988 and bow hunter education became mandatory in 1990. These requirements were put in place to ensure that participants gained knowledge of the respective endeavors in regards to proper equipment, safety practices, ethical behavior, landowner relations, laws, and many other items.

All of these training programs adhere to standards recognized at a national level and those standards can be provided during the work session. These standards outline the learning objectives and require the attendee to participate in demonstrations or activities while at the class.

Over the years, the Safety Division has worked closely with representatives from the Maine Trapper's Association as well as the Maine Bowhunter's Association to ensure that these courses are relevant to the issues and practices of each discipline. Due to adherence to these standards, a graduate is allowed to participate in their respective endeavor in Maine as well as in other states and provinces.

The legislature has recognized that some participants will have prior experience in a respective sport as a junior hunter or trapper or as a member of a family or group that regularly participated in the activity. Still the legislature enacted these training requirements so that all participants would be trained to the same level regardless of experience. Given the number of licensed applicants and the large geography of the state it would pose a significant challenge to ascertain the level of prior knowledge of any student or group of students. To exempt any person or group of people could create challenges in meeting these requirements. The Department is always willing to explore avenues or work collaboratively to provide greater access or opportunity for tribal members to have these courses offered to them.

It is important to note that landowners, other hunters and trappers, and the public have come to expect that all participants will be graduates of the training program for the respective sport they are going to engage in. This training effort has helped to ensure that participants know about best management practices for harvesting and caring for game, equipment selection, law requirements, expectations as a responsible and ethical participant, survival and first aid, and personal safety.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time.